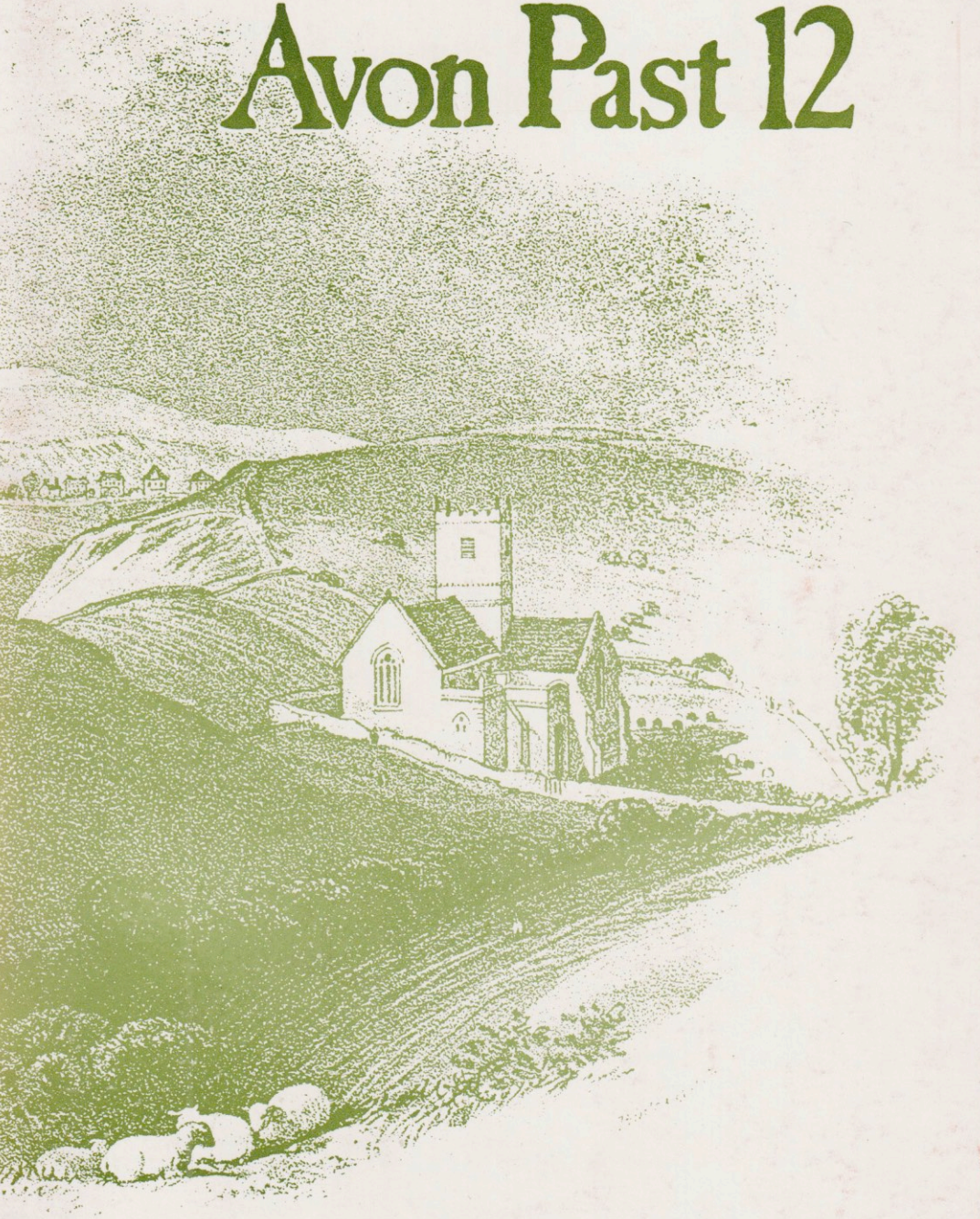
Avon Past 12



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EDITORIAL

This issue is dedicated to the papers given at the Avon Archaeological Society Symposium entitled *The Evolution of the Church in the Landscape,* held at Clevedon on Saturday 27th October 1984, and hosted by the Clevedon & District Archaeological Society.

The Editors would like to thank all subscribers for their patience in the delays which have affected the last three issues. No. 10 (Spring 1984) was not issued until 1985, No. 11 (Autumn 1984) was called the Autumn 1985 issue, in understandable error, as it was in fact not published until late 1986. This present issue, No. 12, which should have been the subscriber's copy for Spring 1985, is now being published in Autumn 1987, and it has been decided to call it the Autumn 1987 issue (for simplicity).

Thank you for bearing with us during a period of pressure on the Editors' spare-time availability and after the loss of our much-missed Marketing and Advertising Manager, Georgina Plowright. A strengthened Editorial Committee plans to work on Nos. 13 and 14, which will be published during 1988. Your loyalty and enthusiasm to see the next issue have kept us going.

We must also thank the authors of papers due to be published in Nos. 13 and 14 for accepting this delay before seeing their work in print. We realise this is very frustrating and are very grateful for their forebearance. We shall soon be in a position to seek new items - so, please, remember *Avon Past* when inspiration strikes!

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THE EARLY MEDIEVAL CHURCH: ITS APPEARANCE AND SETTING

by C. A. Ralegh Radford

The landscape of England is not an unchanging background against which the church - or any other building - can be set. The landscape itself is man-made and is constantly changing. Even Dartmoor, which has been claimed as the last unspoilt wilderness in southern England, has been profoundly modified in the course of several millenia of human activity. If we seek to appreciate the impact of the church on the landscape, we must first define the stage at which this impact occurred. Christianity was a Mediterranean religion and in origin its background was urban. The earliest churches assembled in houses, in which a room was used or set apart for worship. Special buildings began to emerge in the third century in the greater cities, but their architecture remained essentially domestic. The church of San Clemente in Rome is a great palazzo with shops on the ground stage and a hall and other rooms for church purposes on the upper floors. This is an important building, probably the cathedral of Rome before Constantine transformed the barracks of the *Equites singulares* and the Lateran soon after the Peace of the Church in 313.

During the fourth century great hall churches - basilicas - were erected in the larger cities. The Basilica Ursiana, the cathedral of Ravenna, dates from the later part of the century and illustrates the type, which was becoming standardised. The church had some impact on the urban townscape, but it was still overshadowed by the secular buildings and the pagan temples.

Christianity probably arrived in Britain in the second century and it may be deduced that churches of a domestic character were to be found in most Romano-British cities before A.D. 400. It is possible that the most important – London and York – had a recognizable church of the type illustrated from Ravenna, but evidence is hard to find. In any case the church in Britain was poor by contemporary standards; the three British bishops who attended the Council of Rimini in 360 were unable, like the bishops of Gaul, to pay their own expenses and were forced to accept the Imperial offer that the cost of their travel should be borne by the Treasury.

Outside the towns, Christianity had been adopted by a few wealthy landowners, who installed oratories in their villas. Lullingstone is the outstanding example, but there is evidence from Chedworth, to name a local example. Architecturally these were normal villas; the evidence for Christianity is confined to painted wall plaster and mosaics and to fittings.

We must therefore conclude that in England - to use the modern term - the impact of the church on the landscape was negligible before A.D. 400. The few buildings that might be recognised as churches were set in the towns and could hardly compete with the grander secular buildings, both official and domestic, and with great pagan temples such as the Shrine of Sul-Minerva in Bath or the rural establishment at Lydney.

The end of the Roman province of Britain came early in the fifth century. Britain was ruled by tyrants - native chieftains - who deserted the villas and

allowed the towns to fall into decay. Modern research suggests that many of the estates survived as agricultural units, with the *coloni* and peasants serving their new masters. But this was the element that had been least affected by Christianity. The very name *pagani* means the dwellers in the *pagus* surrounding the towns, a sufficient indication of their standing; the evidence is borne out by developments in Central Gaul, where St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, was forced to conduct a systematic campaign against heathen practices in the last quarter of the fourth century. The position is further complicated by the Anglo-Saxon invasions of the fifth century. The whole of eastern Britain was lost to the newcomers in the course of the fifth century, though in Wiltshire and further west - the area in which we are interested today - Saxon settlement began only in the last generation of the sixth century.

The fifth and sixth centuries saw a vigorous missionary effort directed by the Continental churches towards the Insular Celtic areas in Britain and to Ireland. This did not affect the Anglo-Saxon whose conversion was the result of a mission from Rome starting late in the sixth century and of others from Ireland. It was these movements which made the British countryside Christian and it is with the impact of the churches they erected that we are concerned today.

This countryside was still dominated architecturally by the decaying Roman towns and, in the frontier areas and along the coasts, by military works. The villas, largely of half timber or timber on a stone foundation, were probably no more than formless mounds with the rotted superstructure covering the stone bases of the walls. What was new were the few refortifications, such as South Cadbury, dating from c. A.D. 500. The dwellings, whether of chieftain or peasant, were simple structures that sank into the landscape. It was the towns that attracted attention; let me quote a few lines from an Anglo-Saxon poem entitled *The Ruin;* it probably describes Bath:

"Wondrous is this wall-stone
the fates have broken it
have burst the burgh-place
Perished the work of giants
the roofs are fallen
the towers tottering
the hore gate-towers despoiled
rime on the lime
shattered the battlements
riven fallen
under the Eotnish race

Bright were the burgh dwellings
many its princely halls
high its steepled splendour.

Their fortress is become
waste foundations
.....
therefore these courts are dreary
and its purple arch
with its tiles shades
the roost proud of its diadem."

The first church building

The first church building in the countryside of which record has been preserved is a temporary structure of wattles erected for the Easter celebration at the time of the Alleluia victory of St. Germanus over the invaders in 429. "A church woven of branches is prepared for the day of the Lord's resurrection and is made ready in a military campaign as though it were in a city."

But wattled churches seem to have been temporary and unsubstantial. Wood was the normal material used for the early churches of the Insular Celts. To Bede and his contemporaries wooden churches were well known. They were built "in the manner of the Irish" and contrasted with the stone-built greater churches of his own people, which were "in the manner of the Romans."

The wooden churches have seldom survived. The only standing example in England, at Greenstead in Essex, is a humble building, a minor church in no way representative of the greater wooden churches of the early period. It need not detain us. Let us turn to Ireland, to the church of St. Brigid at Kildare, as described by the writer known as Cogitosus, in the second quarter of the seventh century, when the church had been newly rebuilt. "A church of ample size and built aloft to a menacing height and adorned with painted panels." I omit the liturgical details, which do not concern us today. The painting of the Temple at Jerusalem in the Book of Kells of c. 800, shows it as a wooden church with steeply pitched and hipped roof. Contemporary Irish literature suggests that sixty feet was the normal length of a great Irish church of the seventh century and this is borne out by the size of Irish Cathedrals three hundred years later. If this is so the proportions of the painting in the Book of Kells suggest that the church of Kildare was over fifty feet high - some sixteen metres or more. This is probably typical of the greater wooden church of Ireland and Celtic Britain, including those erected by the Irish missions to Northumbria and elsewhere.

But the church did not stand alone at Kildare. In addition to the monastic buildings that must be assumed there were suburbs in which pilgrims, artisans and traders dwelt or to which they resorted. Let me quote again from the same writer: "And who is able to describe in words the greatest glory of this church and the numberless wonders of the city? It is rightly called a city, though it is surrounded by no circuit of walls ... Very great is this city and metropolitan ... The city is the safest refuge for fugitives in the whole land of the Irish. In ... which are laid up the treasures of kings and the splendour of its decorated roofs is most excellent". The rhetorical language is inspired by the description of the New Jerusalem in the Apocalypse. But through the language we glimpse the wonder of the new cities, which had replaced the provincial towns of the Roman provinces and spread to lands that had never known Rome. The *civitates,* the tribal capitals of the Roman provinces, had given way to the *Civitas Dei* of St. Augustine and the landscape was again dominated by local points which expressed the new religion and its ideals. Kildare did not stand alone, though there may have been few on the same scale. In our own region we may point to Glastonbury and probably Congresbury.

Kildare and Glastonbury were monasteries and it is necessary to ask what this meant. Their origin goes back beyond the times of St. Benedict; organizationally and architecturally they have little to do with the Benedictine Order and those others such as the Cistercians which derive from the same source; they have nothing to do with the ordered claustral plan that is so familiar a feature in later medieval England. Primitive Welsh law - and we may add primitive Irish law - divides churches into two classes - the mother churches or *clasiau,* to use the native term, and churches of lesser consideration. The former

are defined as having a position of honour and prestige. In origin they were monasteries and down to the end of Welsh independence in the thirteenth century they were staffed by a community of priests. The same is true of the Saxon 'old ministers'. It will be sufficient to quote two clauses from the Law of 1014: "All churches are not entitled to the same status in the temporal sense, although they have the same consecration in regard to religion"; "Violation of the sanctuary of a chief minister (i.e. a cathedral) ... is to be atoned for ... with five pounds (of gold), that of a rather smaller minster with one hundred and twenty shillings, that of a smaller minster with sixty shillings and that of a field church with thirty shillings." It is clear from parallel texts that the second class represents the 'old minster', staffed by a community of priests and forming the original base for the evangelization of the countryside. Its functions are perhaps best summed up in the late seventh foundation charter of the minster of Bredon on the Hill, Leicestershire; "In view of the growing and multiplying of the number of Christians in the island of Britain ... a minster and oratory of monks serving God should be founded ...and also a priest of honest life and good reputation instituted, who should bring the grace of baptism and the teaching of the Gospel doctrine to the people committed to his care." It is these old minsters that provide the main architectural impact of the church upon the scape.

Let us turn to Glastonbury, where we can trace the slow development of this impact, though the buildings have been destroyed and only plans are available. The oldest structure is the wooden church of British days; it probably dates from the sixth century. No trace of this building remains, but we know from later records that it was sixty feet long and stood on the site of the Romanesque Lady Chapel; it must have resembled Kildare. To this, early in the eighth century. They added an appendix in the form of a stone church, which can have differed little from the minster like Breamore that I am about to discuss. Minor additions followed in the course of the eighth century including an atrium linking the old wooden church with its stone 'appendix.' The mid-tenth century saw the arrival of the Benedictine Reform movement under Abbot Dunstan, later Archbishop of Canterbury. He began to build a great church, of almost cathedral-like proportions following the model which had been established two centuries earlier on the Continent. The immediate model was the abbey church known as Cluny II, where modern research has revealed the plan of the tenth-century church and allowed the preparation of a scale model. The church at Glastonbury was left half-finished and to appreciate its size we must turn to Sherborne where a comparable monastic church, which was also a cathedral, was built in the course of the eleventh century. The plan shows that the only substantial deviation from the present church was at the east end, where the presbytery was only half the existing length of the eastern arm. The elevation of the present church and its bulk are far larger than those of the eleventh century, but when allowance is made for these it is possible to judge the scale of the early monastic church, which would be comparable with the lesser abbey churches of post-Conquest days and surpass the greater parish churches of the late Middle Ages. By the year 1066, there must have been some forty of these

churches, mostly in southern England and not all of the monumental scale of Sherborne.

Most of the old minsters, which never adopted the Benedictine Rule, were far humbler buildings. It is possible that some of the larger churches of this type have not survived later rebuilding. But the few that are still recognisable may well be typical of this class of church. Breamore in Hampshire perhaps gives the best impression of a minster set in a rural landscape; the chancel has been lengthened and a south porch added; otherwise the plan and bulk are little changed. In particular the central tower is likely to have been a common feature and one providing a considerable impact on the landscape. Wareham is another site, where we can judge the scale of an important Anglo-Saxon minster. The present west tower and the eastern chapel on the south side are post-Conquest and the intervening nave is of the nineteenth century. But this nave replaces a Saxon minster church of similar bulk, of which a painting survives. It must have been an impressive building standing on the rise above the river. Other minsters are more difficult to visualise. They were usually important and wealthy churches and were rebuilt on more than one occasion within the Middle Ages. Perhaps the best example of a major minster church that survives in part is Brixworth in Northamptonshire, but even there the aisles have been lost and the east end is a reconstruction on the old plan.

The old minster served an area that is generally represented by a group of modern parishes. It was often situated in a royal vill. Perhaps the best illustration that can be given is to say that the parish of an old minster is often coterminous with the medieval hundred. This would give a tally of some twenty-five in the historic county of Somerset or in Wiltshire and indicates a spread throughout the landscape to an extent that no other important building shows at this date.

But the minsters were not the only churches in pre-Conquest England. Visiting the mother church, as the minster was sometimes known, must often have been difficult and local landowners felt the urge to provide better facilities for their peasants. Proprietary churches of this sort are mentioned as early as the eighth century, but they must have been rare at that date. The first stage seems to have been the cross - "the standard of the holy cross raised on high for the convenience of prayer", as it is described by one contemporary writer. The outstanding example is Bewcastle where the 5 metre-high cross, now mutilated, stands alongside the seventeenth century parish church. Such survivals are rare; in many parts of the country, where suitable stone is lacking, these crosses must have been of wood.

The ecclesiastical ordinance of King Edgar (959-75) marks an important stage in the recognition of these lesser churches:

> "I, 1: And all payment of tithe is to be made to the old minster, to which the parish belongs.
>
> I, 2; If however there is any thegn who has on his estate a church with which there is a graveyard he is to pay the third part of his own tithe into his church.

This is only a part of the legislation aimed at preserving the rights of the old

minsters, while enabling justice to be done to the new churches that were arising. In southern England most of parish churches originated in this manner and a large proportion must have been in existence by 1066. Few survive in recognizable form. They were small buildings and rapidly outgrown. Their existence is attested by surviving detail like the pre-Conquest doorways at Limpley Stoke and Somerford Keynes, both of early Saxon date, probably c. 700.

Note must also be taken of a specialised type that arose in late Saxon times. A law tract of the eleventh century lays down that if a churl (a free peasant) prosper so that he hold five hides of land (a medium sized village) - and a number of other things, including a bell tower, he becomes worthy of thegn right. Some of these bell towers have survived, principally those belonging to important landowners. The promoted thegn probably had to make do with a wooden tower. The finest example is Earl's Barton in Northamptonshire, where the surface of the tower is elaborately arcaded; it was the seat of the Earls of Huntingdon, a property that passed to the Scottish crown. Singleton in Sussex is a plainer example, built on a property held by Morcar, who plays a part in the resistance to William the Conqueror.

I have traced the gradual spread of the church into the countryside and endeavoured to show its progress and the extent to which the buildings required for Christian worship provided a new visual element diffused to an extent never previously known in England. The effect is best summarised in contemporary terms by a Welsh panegyrist of the twelfth century. Gruffydd ap Cynan, succeeding after a period of invasion and anarchy, restored peace to the medieval principality and modern county of Gwynedd in northwest Wales. "No longer did men build and sow for the needs of a single year ... They planted orchards and laid out gardens; they set up fences and dug out ditches. They ventured to build in stone and raised up stone churches in place of the old timber oratories ... until the face of Gwynedd was bespangled with them as the firmament with stars." It brings out not only the visual impact of the church on the landscape, but its spiritual influence on the minds of men; the two ran together.

As a postscript I propose to say something about the coming of Christianity to the Norse colonial world. As a result of recent research it is possible to visualise the impact of Christianity on a pagan land rather more closely than is possible in early Saxon England. I shall speak of the far north and northwest but what I shall say applies to the Scandinavian lands of the north and east of England and *mutatis mutandis* gives a picture of the impact of the church on the pagan invaders of fifth century Britain.

The Isle of Man had a Celtic Christian tradition before it was conquered by the pagan Norse in the ninth century. In the tenth century it became a Norse kingdom closely connected with the Norse dynasty of Dublin. Christianity was reintroduced from Ireland. The Cathedral of Sodor (the southern isles, i.e. Man and the Hebrides) is a small rectangular building of Irish type, comparable to Irish cathedrals of the day. Only the base of the walls survive, but it may be restored as a building on the same scale as the wooden churches of Kildare and Glastonbury. To the west is the round tower of stone. The effect is dominant;

it is repeated in the rather later complex on Egilsay in Orkney, where the Church of St. Magnus the Martyr follows a rather later Irish pattern, in which church and tower are combined in a single building. A similar complex was planned on the little tidal islet of Birsay off the Mainland of Orkney; only the base of the walls survives. Such buildings must have been rare in the far north, but the remains of the Cathedral at Gardar in Greenland have also been uncovered.

But the most interesting contribution to our subject comes from Brattahlid, the seat of Eric the Red, the founder of the Norse settlement in Greenland, whose millenary was celebrated two years ago. Eric, an outlaw from Iceland, was a pagan; his wife, Thjodhild, was a Christian. She built a church a little distance from the farm and hidden by a fold in the ground. Rather later the church was moved down into the farmstead, clearly when Eric had died and his successor was Christian. The earliest church, built by Thjodhild is a simple rectangular structure with benches, suitable for daily prayer, but with no liturgical arrangement. It was built of turf and timber and fades into the landscape; it illustrates the earliest stage of Christianisation in an alien land. Later, as the community flourished a chancel was added to house and altar, a sign that a priest was more frequently available. In the later stages stone replaced the humbler materials, a development noted by the contemporary Welsh panegyrist, whom I have quoted.

Lecture given at Clevedon on Saturday 27th October 1984 as part of the Avon Archaeological Council symposium: "The Evolution of the Church in the Landscape".

FURTHER READING

Other works by Dr. C. A. R. Radford include:-
'The church in Somerset down to 1100' *SANH* **106** (1961-62) 28-45
'The Celtic monastery in Britain' *Archaeol. Cambrensis* **111** (1962) 1-24.
'Glastonbury Abbey' in *The quest for Arthur's Britain* (ed. G. Ashe), 1968, 119-38.
'Christian origins in Britain' *Medieval Archaeol.* **15** (1971) 1-12.

THE IMPACT OF HISTORIC AND RELIGIOUS CHANGES ON THE PARISH CHURCHES OF AVON

by J. H. Bettey

For the observant visitor many parish churches retain abundant evidence of the ways in which they have developed and of changes in religious ideas, ceremonies and customs over the centuries. Evidence of medieval decoration, furnishings and methods of worship survive in numerous churches; and in many the changes in religious observances ordered by successive governments during the sixteenth century, or imposed later by changing fashions and standards, can still be clearly seen, since often the old was not swept away completely but the new was superimposed upon it. Parish churches are generally by far the oldest surviving buildings in any district, and their value as a source for local history is enormous. Many of the parish churches of Avon provide copious evidence of their former appearance, of the way in which they have been altered to meet new requirements in liturgy and doctrine, and of the place which they occupied in the local community as the focus of charity, education and recreation, as well as of religious life. This paper discusses some of the surviving evidence which is to be seen in the churches of Avon and the surrounding area; readers will no doubt be able to add many other examples to those given here.

A few churches retain evidence of pre-Christian beliefs and of the way in which pagan ideas survived throughout the Middle Ages. Oldbury-on-Severn church with its Saxon dedication to St Arilda is situated within a prehistoric earthwork, and Stanton Drew is beside the great ritual monument there. Abson has a male fertility symbol, or possibly it is a warning against sensuality; Clevedon possesses a female counterpart or 'Sheila-na-Gig'. One of the corner stones of the altar to Sulis Minerva which stood before the Roman Temple in Bath is now built into the north-east corner of Compton Dando church. The figure of the Green Man, the pre-Christian 'Wodehouse/wodewose', or god of vegetable fertility, is to be found in church carving and decoration throughout the whole area from small Norman churches such as Hinton Blewitt or Lullington to a highly-sophisticated late-medieval church like St. Mary Redcliffe. The roof bosses of St. Mary Redcliffe also display a remarkable assortment of pagan symbolism, mazes, man-eating monsters, mermaids, signs of the zodiac and curious creatures; many other parish churches have similar pre-Christian or grotesque figures, often carved alongside angels, saints and religious emblems. As well as the remarkable Saxon church of St Lawrence at Bradford-on-Avon, sufficient fragments of Saxon stone-carving survive in local churches to show how widespread Saxon churches or crosses were in the district. Examples include Colerne, Kelston and Rowberrow, and the powerful carving of the Harrowing of Hell now in Bristol cathedral, while above the chancel arch at Bitton are the impressive remains of a great Saxon 'rood' or figure of the crucified Christ, although only the feet remain *in situ.* On the southern face of the tower of Beverstone there is a fine Saxon carving of the Risen Christ holding a tall cross. Even in an apparently late-medieval church like Banwell a carved Saxon stone has been found, while at Chew Stoke Saxon stone-carving can be seen in the

churchyard wall, and no doubt more such carvings await discovery.

The amount of surviving Norman work in the churches of the district, often still recognisable beneath later additions and enlargements, leaves no doubt of the energy and enthusiasm of the Church during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, nor of the amount of church building which that period witnessed. Notable examples are St James in Bristol, Compton Martin, Lullington, Christon, Englishcombe, Siston, Ozleworth and Leonard Stanley.. Especially impressive are the surviving Norman fonts, since the ancient font, the symbol of a parish church with rights of baptism, often survives even though all else has been rebuilt. A popular theme for both Saxon and Norman carvers was the incessant conflict between the forces of good and evil, and the necessity for the Christian soul to seek the sanctuary of the Church and its sacraments if the assaults of the devil and his hosts were to be resisted. Fine examples of Norman fonts which illustrate this theme can be seen at Locking where four figures clasp the font to protect it from the assaults of devils in the form of snakes, at Siston which possesses one of the six finely-decorated lead fonts made in Gloucestershire during the twelfth century, and at Lullington near Frome. The ornate Norman font at Lullington shows the devils which lie in wait for the soul, and the flower-strewn heavenly mansions which can only be reached through the sacraments of the Church, while deeply-cut around the font is the inscription HOC FONTIS SACRO PEREUNT DELICTA LAVACRO ("by the washing of this sacred font sins are cleansed"). Norman doorways, tympana and other carvings are also to be seen at Chewton Mendip, Siston, Stanton St Quinton, Flax Bourton and Christon. At Moreton Valence the north doorway has a powerfully carved tympanum depicting the vigorous conflict between St Michael and the Dragon, while at Lullington the north doorway has an excellent figure of Christ in Majesty which obviously came from the workshops of Malmesbury where the finest of all the Norman carving in the west-country can be seen in the great south porch of the former Benedictine abbey.

The Bristol region is not rich in surviving medieval wall-paintings, and most were destroyed by the reformers during the sixteenth century when pictures of Christ, Our Lady and the saints were thought to be idolatrous. Enough examples survive however, to show the wealth of colour that must have transformed the interiors of most parish churches, and the evidence of sixteenth-century churchwardens' accounts leaves no doubt of the amount of wall-painting which once existed. Fragments survive at Hardington near Frome, at Winterbourne and Yate, at Berkeley where part of the 'Doom' or Last Judgement survives over the chancel arch, at Nunney, and at Cameley where several fragments remain including the decorated reredos to a former nave altar, part of a large painting of St Christopher on the north wall, and a fine jester with cap and bells, now incongurously situated above the pulpit. Most stained glass was likewise ruthlessly smashed during the Reformation, but enough fragments survive to show the wealth of colour, artistic excellence and interest which most churches lost when their beautifully-coloured windows were destroyed. Fine examples of surviving medieval glass can be seen in the tower window at St

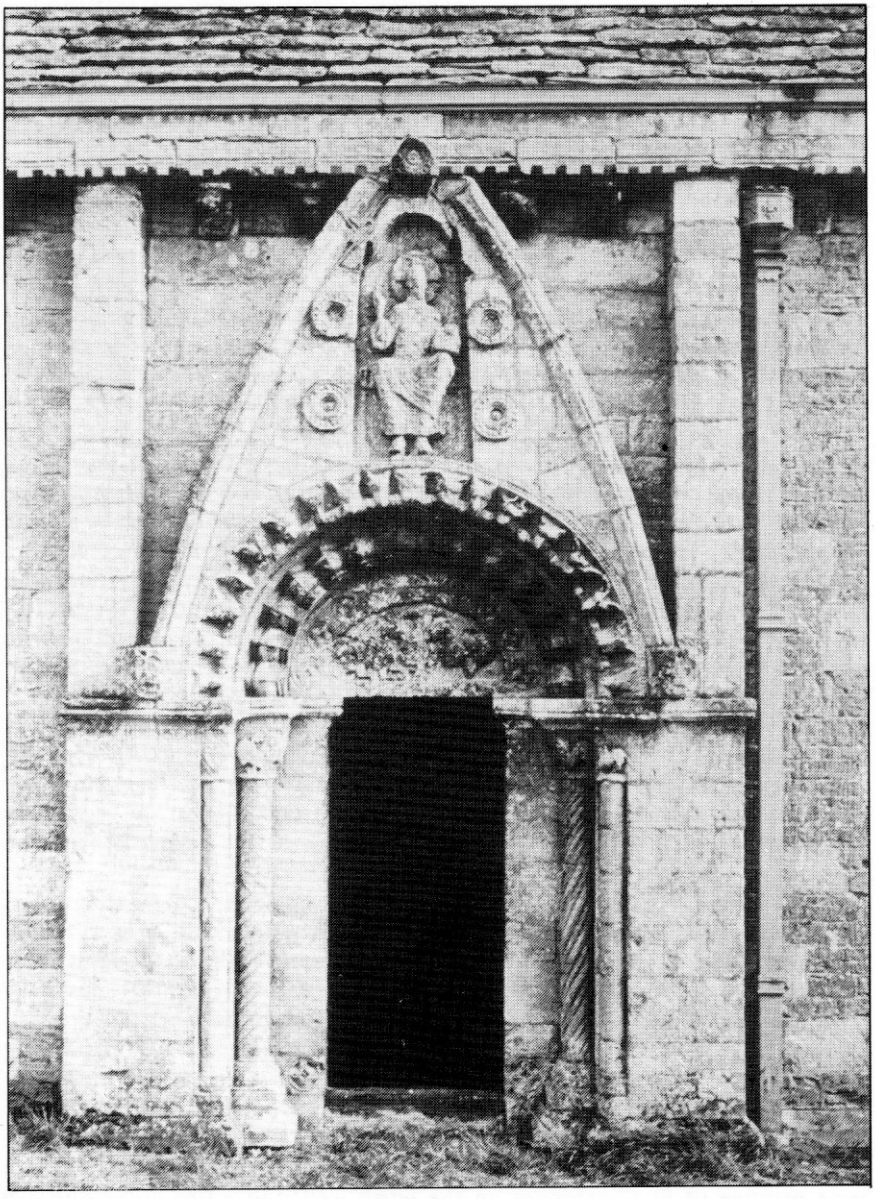


Figure of Christ above the north doorway at Lullington near Frome
The twelfth-century doorway and finely-carved figure of this interesting Norman church provide a good example of the sophisticated work produced in this region during this period. The church also has a chancel arch decorated with birds and monsters, and a notable Norman font.

Mary Redcliffe, at Orchardleigh near Frome, Winscombe, Dyrham, Iron Acton and Tortworth. At the remote church of St Catherine's near Bath, there is a beautiful four-light window depicting the Virgin, the Crucifixion, St John and St Peter, while below is the figure of the donor John Cantlow, prior of Bath, who presented the window in 1490. Such windows and fragments of wall-painting enable the visitor to make the difficult leap of imagination necessary to visualize the appearance of English parish churches before all the destruction by the reformers and the puritans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Medieval statues of Christ and the saints were also declared idolatrous and were ordered to be destroyed by the Act against Superstitious Books and Images of 1550, but enough escaped destruction to show something of what has been lost. The remarkable carvings at Malmesbury and Lullington, and the late-medieval bosses at St Mary Redcliffe have already been mentioned; other medieval statues can be seen at Langridge, which has a figure of the Virgin and Child, at Chewton Mendip, where the figure of the Risen Christ surrounded by angels carrying the Instruments of the Passion is on the western face of the tower and at Yatton, where as well as many medieval gargoyles, there is a figure of the Trinity above the ornate west front. Carvings of the Virgin appear at Steeple Ashton, and on the towers at Banwell and East Brent; on the latter the Virgin's feet rest firmly on a Green Man. In many other churches the statues have gone, but the empty niches in which they once stood bear witness to their former presence. During Lent, the statues of the saints were draped, and a curtain was hung across the chancel; at Orchardleigh and Portbury, there are carved figures on either side of the chancel still holding the rings which secured the line for the Lenten veil.

The great rood screens which once divided the nave and chancel in almost all churches and were surmounted by the 'rood' or crucifix, have almost all been destroyed, either during the Reformation or during Victorian restoration. Enough survives, however, to show how ornate and colourful these screens were, and how much of great beauty and craftmanship was lost by their destruction. Good survivals can be seen at Banwell, Chew Magna, Long Ashton, Congresbury, Beverstone and Berkeley. At Puxton, the screen was obviously cut down very roughly with a saw, leaving the beams which supported it sticking out from the wall where they can still be seen just as the destructive reformers left them more than four centuries ago. A much more common survival than the screen itself, is the stairway which once gave access to the rood loft above the screen. The fact that these are to be found in almost all churches is impressive evidence of the widespread existence of rood screens.

The belief that there was little preaching in medieval parish churches is obviously a myth, for many late-medieval pulpits survive throughout the region. Iron Acton has the remarkable pulpit or preaching cross in the churchyard, and beautifully-carved late-medieval pulpits can be seen at Chipping Sodbury, Cold Ashton, Rangeworthy, Hawkesbury, Hutton, Bleadon, Nailsea and Wick St Lawrence. At West Kington near Castle Combe, the fine late-medieval pulpit is of interest, since from it Hugh Latimer must have expounded some of his

early ideas; he was rector of West Kington during the 1530's, and went on to become one of the leading reformers and bishop of Worcester, finally being executed together with Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, at Oxford during the reign of Queen Mary.

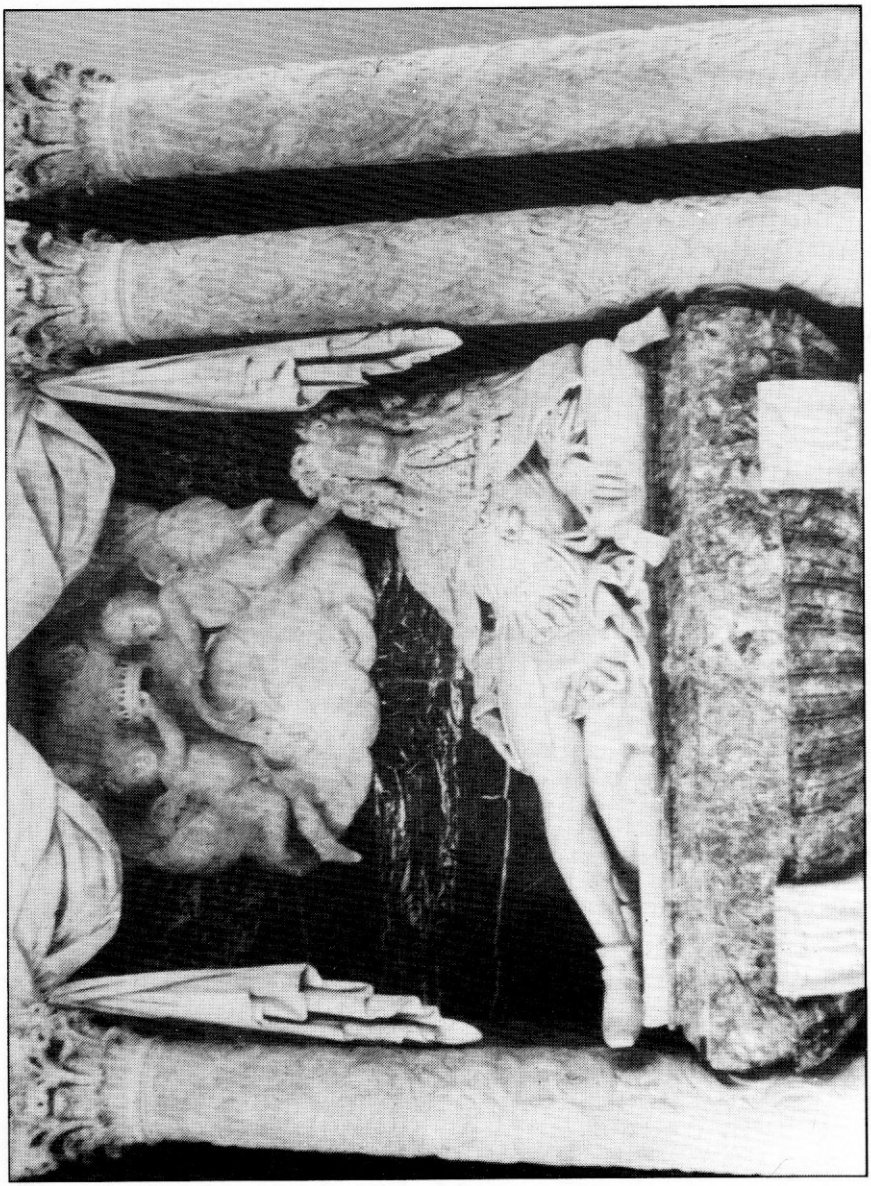
As soon as preaching became common, pews and benches were needed for the congregation, and some of the earliest pews in the country survive at Clapton-in-Gordano. Post-Reformation furnishings and fittings in the parish churches of the Bristol region include numerous fine examples of the royal coat of arms, for example, at Cameley, Nunney, St Mary Redcliffe, All Saints, Bristol, Thornbury, Tortworth, Almondsbury and many others, with ferocious carvings of the lion and unicorn, obviously the work of local craftsmen.

The impact of the religious changes and conflicts of the seventeenth century can be seen in many churches, most notably in the fine pulpits and other furnishings, and in seventeenth-century texts and sentences of scripture which were painted on the walls of churches. Pulpits and other seventeenth-century furnishings can be seen at Abson, Siston, Keynsham, Langridge, Cameley, Tickenham, Puxton and Hill. Eighteenth-century pews, pulpits and other furnishings survive at Didmarton, Holcombe near Stratton on the Fosse, Alveston, Hill and Cameley. Numerous churches also possess fine eighteenth century chandeliers, one of the products of the Bristol brass industry.

In a region which has been so dominated by a few very wealthy families, it is not surprising to find that some parish churches are overwhelmed by the size and number of family monuments. Perhaps the most remarkable example is at Great Badminton, where there is a splendid series of monuments to the Dukes of Beaufort, but other notable monuments include the Newton Monument at Yatton, the Choke tomb at Long Ashton, Sir John Newton at East Harptree, the Rodneys at Rodney Stoke, the Bridges at Keynsham, and the Wynters at Dyrham. At Hill, the church is dominated by the eighteenth-century family pew of the Fust family; and at Mells, there are very fine tombs in both church and churchyard, culminating in the great equestrian monument to Edward Horner, who died while fighting in France in 1917.

There is ample evidence in many churches of the close connection between the Church and the community, even after all the changes of the Reformation. Schools were held in many churches, and at Old Dilton near Westbury, the schoolroom survives as a gallery of the church. There are documentary references to schools held in the churches at Winford, Wrington, Minchinhampton and elsewhere, while many early schools survive beside churches or in the churchyard, a notable example being at Norton St Philip. Many parish charities were administered by the clergy or churchwardens, and the Church's concern for the poor can be seen in the bequest boards such as those at Didmarton or Nunney, and in 'Dole Cupboards' like the good example at Axbridge or in almsboxes and in the painted exhortations to 'Remember the Poor'.

Churches and churchyards were not only used for religious worship and for burials, but were also the scene of many other community activities. Late-medieval Church houses in which parish activities, church-ales and other fund-raising schemes were held, survive beside many local churches, including Chew



Effigy of the first Duke of Beaufort in Great Badminton parish church
This is a good example of the huge monuments which were erected in some parish churches by local gentry families. At Great Badminton there are several other equally high-quality monuments. This one is by Grinling Gibbons and is dated 1699; it shows the Duke in his garter robes. Note the ducal coronet being carried aloft to be greeted by the heavenly hosts with palms and crowns.

Magna, East Harptree, Yatton and Standish. Typical of many church houses is the example at Long Ashton, which was established in the late Middle Ages and was known as 'The Angel'. During the seventeenth century, the Puritans disapproved of church ales and similar events, and the building ceased to be used for parish meetings and revels and became an ale-house. This was a natural progression since it was already equipped with brewing utensils and facilities. It survives today as a public house and is still called 'The Angel'.

Games continued to be played in the churchyards until the practice of erecting headstones made this impossible. There are many documentary references to fives and other games in local churchyards, and a court case over the churchyard at Dundry in 1633 produced a long list of traditional activities which had always taken place there and is a remarkable tribute to the continuing involvement of the Church with the parish community. The activities included maypole dancing, fives and other games as well as:

> "... sportinge, kissinge, bulbayting, coyting, bowling, shooteing att butts, cudgleplaying. tennis playing and divers other sportes and playes ..."

FURTHER READING

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NOTE

This paper has been submitted by Dr. Bettey in place of the talk he gave at the Clevedon Symposium in October 1984. The forthcoming volume on *The Archaeology of Avon* (to be published by Avon County Council) will contain a further related contribution from him.

THE IMPACT OF NONCONFORMITY ON THE LANDSCAPE TO 1850

by David Dawson

The complex development of nonconformity in the area of the county of Avon and its surroundings had physical effects on the landscape. These may not be as prominent as those changes wrought in Wales or the textile manufacturing centres of the north Midlands but they are important elements of the post-medieval townscape and countryside which can be described and an explanation of their location attempted. Two approaches are suggested: first the location of chapels in the environment into which they have been introduced and, second, the relationships between congregations which gave rise to distinct patterns in the distribution of chapel buildings.

This is not the place to define the many tightly interwoven strands of nonconformity and their development in this area, but it should be noted that most of the denominations which are found before 1850 have a common tradition of building which for most of the period was shared with the Established Church. Our stereotype picture of the ordinary parish church, invariably "Gothic", with its seating facing eastward towards the choir and towards the high altar beyond, is essentially one bequeathed to us by the influence of the ideas of Pugin and the Tractarian Society which led to changes in the use, appearance and internal arrangement of churches which were as radical as those at the Reformation (Chatfield 7-9). When one compares the internal appearance of a rich urban church such as St. James in the Haymarket, Bristol, as recorded by Samuel Johnson in 1828 (BRSMG:M 2808) or one of the few country churches to escape Victorian rebuilding and restoration such as Old Dilton, Wiltshire, with the interior of the Lewins Mead Unitarian Church, Bristol, or Horningsham chapel, Wiltshire, it becomes apparent that they share a common emphasis on the participation of the entire congregation in all aspects of worship, including communion, and the importance of preaching the Word. In each of these instances, maximum use is made of the interior by the provision of box-pews and galleries to accommodate a large congregation and these fittings are disposed around a high pulpit fitted to one wall near the centre of the church. The minor difference in planning is that from the 1630s the Church of England buildings usually kept the communion table in a railed off area at the east end as Laud instructed. Rich urban churches like St. James, Bristol, could afford to go further by building a huge timber reredos surrounded by elaborate mural paintings on the east wall. Many similarities also occur in details of external design and when fashions in internal arrangement and architectural styles changed in the mid-nineteenth century, they were followed by the designers of both nonconformist and Church of England churches.

Before describing the location in which such buildings are found, it should be remembered that although there is a wealth of documentary evidence surviving which records the process of starting a new congregation, these minutes rarely indicate the precise reasons for the choice of a particular site. A few chapels were sited because of the specific associations of that spot. For example

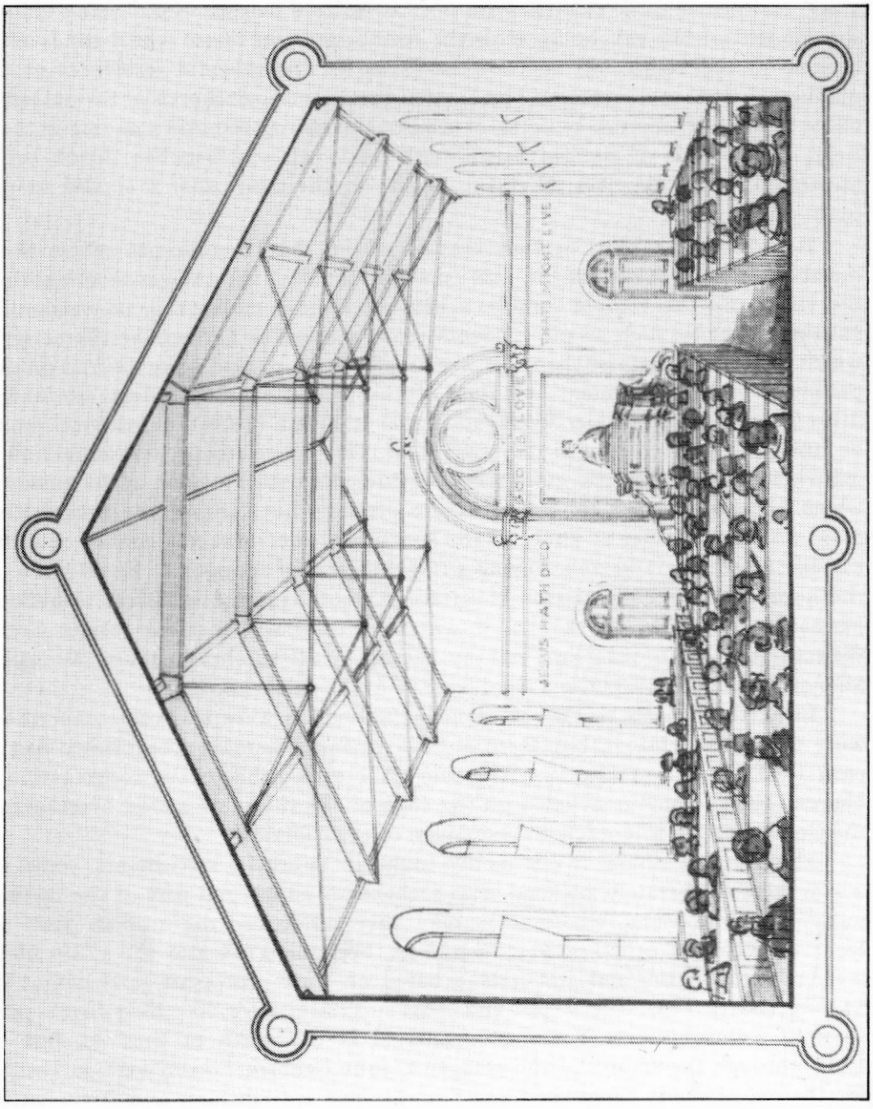
tradition asserts that Wesley, Baptist Mills, was founded on the place by the bank of the river Frome where Wesley had preached in 1739 and the stone on which he had stood on that occasion was carefully incorporated in the building. Highbury (founded in 1842), Bristol, commemorates, in a way reminiscent of the founding of some Medieval churches, the much earlier and violent events of the 1550s in the reign of Queen Mary when several Protestants were burnt at the stake for refusing to deny their beliefs. There are plaques both inside and out of the church recording those who had been put to death on that spot (Ayres, Powell). The reason for the location of Zion, Bedminster, also has a familiar Medieval ring. It marks the very orchard wherein John Hare, the highly successful oil-cloth manufacturer, had slept as a penniless youth preparing to enter the city of Bristol on the following day to try his fortune. In 1830, he fulfilled the vow he made that night that if he prospered he would build a chapel (Cozens).

The location of most chapels seems to be more a matter of suitability of site and availability of resources. Capital and running expenses to let, buy or build, had to come from subscriptions raised by the members and their sympathisers. Tribute must be paid to those industrialists such as Handel Cossham and Henry Overton Wills who were generous in their subscriptions to new building projects (Wills on his death was discovered to have thirty silver trowels, mementoes of laying various chapel foundation stones), but most of the resources were raised from ordinary people and the process could be slow (Ayres 50). For instance, over 100 members of the Whiteway Society, one of the societies of Reformed Wesleyan Methodists associated with Zion, Kingswood, met on 29th September, 1856 to resolve to build a new chapel and Sunday school and appoint a committee to raise the necessary money. A month later, the committee was in the position to purchase "the piece of ground belonging to Mr Edward Milsom" but it was not until 2nd September 1857 that they were able to accept the plans and specifications of Aaron Phipps to undertake the work for £295-16-0. The chapel was opened on Whit Sunday, 23rd May 1858 with its sittings let at 9d a quarter.

The plans of this chapel, Bethel Free Methodist Church, St. George, have not survived. Such documents rarely do, but those of Ashton Gate Free Methodist, which are dated 27th March 1875, are preserved in the collections of Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery. They were drawn up by William Nield of Clifton and consist of a perspective interior view (Mb 1187) as well as a ground plan (Mb 1189), elevations (Mb 1253), and sections (Mb 1188). It is a typical modest late nineteenth-century building, scarcely higher than the two-storey terraced houses around it, with a pulpit on the end wall below a stencilled text, but it lacks the galleries of so many larger churches.

Chapels in the countryside

Some chapels form isolated features in the rural landscape. The sites of some of these, such as the Friends' Meetings at Kings Weston and Frenchay, were chosen in the uncertain days before the passing of the Act of Toleration in



Ashton Gate Methodist Free Church, Bristol
View of proposed interior by William Nield, 1875. Copyright of Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery (BRSMG: M6 1187).

1689. Neither of these examples are now as isolated because the recent expansion of Bristol has caught up with the former meeting-house whilst the latter became in the eighteenth century the focus for the splendid residences of a number of Quaker merchants. The former Congregational church at Swineford, a late nineteenth-century building of timber and corrugated-iron standing in the fields by the side of the old Bristol-Bath road, half-way between Bitton and Swineford, probably owes its choice of site to the desire that it should serve both communities.

It is more common to find chapels within the communities where their members lived. In a settlement, this usually meant that if a site was sought within the village-plan, this could only be achieved by the demolition or conversion of existing property such as the fifteenth-century house at Croscombe (Somerset), which served as a Baptist chapel. It was usually easier to find a site on land on the periphery of the settlement and then often on land which was least useful for other purposes. The former Wesleyan chapel at Bitton (1834) for instance stands on low-lying ground close to the river Boyd. This is a relatively substantial building when compared to the more modest structures used by some of the missions which because of their ephemeral nature often do not survive. The Bristol Itinerant Society's chapel at Hinton (1843) was a well-constructed timber building capable of seating 130 and costing £150, but it was designed to be portable in the hope that the congregation it attracted would find the resources to build a permanent structure (Crick 21). It was for this reason that the former Great Western Railway broad-guage railway carriage used as the Portbury Wesleyan Mission passed on in 1899 to a third lease of life as an outhouse.

In all the villages so far mentioned, the chapels were in close competition with the parish church, but there are settlements where nonconformity had a clear field. At Upton Cheyney, the sole place of worship is the congregational church (1834) which is situated on the edge of the village on a crest overlooking the Golden Valley where few traces remain of the colleries.

This state of affairs is commonly found in industrial settlements, some of which were deliberately planned with a chapel as an integral part of the community. The Moravians, whose ideas may have influenced the utopian plans of Robert Owen and other early industrialists, between 1744 and the 1780s built seven villages in England and Ireland based on their prototype at Herrnhut in Saxony (Darly 148). The largest and most successful were, like their first settlement at Fulneck (West Yorkshire), situated in the north of England, but in 1745, through the efforts of the evangelist, John Cennick, houses were purchased for their societies at Kingswood and East Tytherton (Wiltshire) and at the latter a small planned settlement was begun. The earliest building, the school house dated 1785, is set behind a row of buildings of 1792 comprising the sisters' house, the chapel and the minister's house. This row forms one side of a spacious square green.

Here cottage industries provided the economic basis of the community. Later, when nonconformist industrialists began to build large factories, a few took the care to provide a church to serve their new settlements. The classic example is the impressive, if somewhat bizarre, Congregational church built in 1858-1859

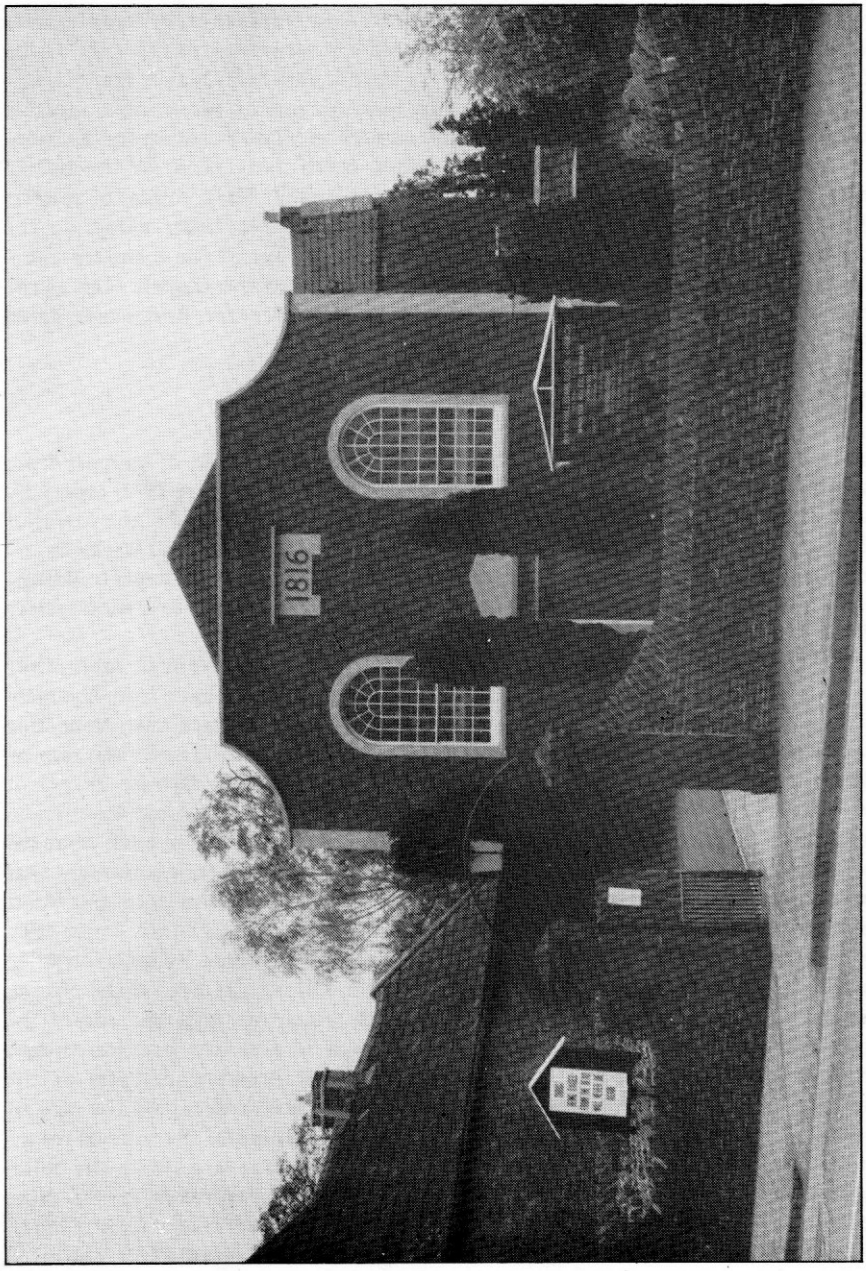
by Sir Titus Salt for his model town at Saltaire (West Yorkshire). Perhaps because industry was not organised on this scale within a rural setting in this part of the country, there are no good examples to be found. Further, Quaker manufacturers such as William Champion would not have dreamt of providing a meeting house for their employees in new settlements such as his at Warmley and Kelston.

Most of the latter industrial settlements, particularly those of the Bristol and North Somerset coalfields, are decidedly unplanned. They consist of scatters of individual cottages and the occasional row of houses either alongside the verges of the main roads or in irregular plots carved out of the formerly unenclosed land. Among such squatter settlements are dotted the chapels such as the Independent chapel at White's Hill, dated 1816, and Ebenezer, Bridgeyate, dated 1810.

Chapels in Towns

Traditionally nonconformity has drawn a considerable amount of support from townspeople. Although many chapels have been demolished since 1940 especially in the central areas of the cities of Bristol and Bath, the city suburbs, the towns of Chipping Sodbury, Keynsham, Marshfield, Pensford, Thornbury and Wickwar and many of the newer urban areas preserve a surprising number of chapel buildings. Not all are still in use for worship for many have been converted to a wide variety of other uses from houses to factories and car-showrooms.

In the seventeenth-century, congregations met in any convenient rooms they could find. These premises were usually in buildings running back from the main street frontage of the medieval tenement blocks. Over the years, such a meeting place might be rebuilt many times as the congregation consolidated their tenure. Three stages in this process are exemplified by the old Baptist chapel at Tewkesbury (Gloucestershire) and, in Bristol, John Wesley's New Room and Broadmead Baptist Church. At Tewkesbury, later accretions have been removed to restore the chapel to resemble its condition about 1720 when it is thought that the congregation felt enough confidence to cut out part of the floor and insert large chapel-like windows in the timber-framed medieval hall-house which they had been using for worship since about 1690. Access is gained by a narrow alley running through a building fronting the street and along the side of the chapel. Beyond the alley leads to the Baptist cemetery which occupies the end of the same tenement plot. John Wesley's New Room is in a similar poistion tucked away from the main street fronts of Horsefair and Broadmead. Parts of the present building are a 1748 rebuilding of the house which occupied the plot of ground purchased by Wesley in 1739. It retains the stable and the suite of rooms above the chapel for the use of visiting ministers. Since the late 1940s, the buildings which used to shield it from view from the two main streets have been replaced by screen walls and open courtyards. Broadmead Baptist Church illustrates a further stage in the process. The present building of 1969 is situated above a range of shops, on the same site as the rooms which the congregation first occupied in 1671. It is now in a prominent position in Union Street which was driven through this area in 1875, but originally was in precisely the same kind



White's Hill Evangelical Church, Winterbourne
Opened 1816 and set well back from the road facing Whiteshill Common.
Photograph by the author, 1986.

of location as the New Room, that is midway between Horsefair and Broadmead.

Such a situation deeply embedded in the fabric of a medieval town could have drawbacks as the Bristol Churchgoer, Joseph Leech, noted in September, 1843. "One of the greatest inconveniences of Maryport (St. Mary-le-Port, Bristol) is its close contiguity to Bridge Street Independent Chapel, with regard to which it stands in a parallel situation little more than, if so much as, twelve yards apart. From where I sat in the church I could see the people rising up and sitting down, and going through all their evolutions close by, and while the first and second lessons were being read, we had the advantage of their melody "next door" with a distinctness which convinced me that they in turn must have the full use of our organ" (Leech 7).

Another type of site favoured by seventeenth - and eighteenth - century chapels is a location on the edge of the built-up area. In a town with a single main street such as the Medieval planned town of Marshfield, a site behind the frontage of a tenement block such as the Bristol examples just cited will be on the edge of this area but there are many others which were deliberately founded among the secluded gardens and orchards on the edge of the town. The Rosemary Street Meeting, founded in 1670 on ground in Broadmead belonging to one Dennis Hollister, and the Moravian Chapel founded in 1756 in a garden in Upper Maudlin Street are two Bristol examples (Mortimer 14).

A change in confidence in the eighteenth century is demonstrated by the building of structures of considerable grandeur on prominent street-front sites both within the older parts of towns and the new suburbs. Rook Lane Chapel, Frome, dated 1707, is one of the magnificent examples preserved in those towns made prosperous by the wool trade. The Unitarian Church in Lewins Mead, Bristol, rebuilt in 1789-1791, was described in 1800 as "a large, elegant and costly place of worship; and may be ranked among the principal public buildings" (Edwards 1800, 131). Even a simple conversion such as Salem, the chapel of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion (1775) near the quay in Bristol has an imposing facade (BRSMG:M 2531). In the following century, unashamedly huge buildings were erected. Perhaps one of the grandest of all in Avon is that built for the Irvingites in 1840, which as its present name, St. Mary-on-the-Quay, implies, was sited on the main quayside in Bristol.

New suburbs were similarly served by new chapels. At Westbury Leigh and Penknap on the western edge of the town of Westbury (Wiltshire), two large brick-built Baptist chapels of 1786 and 1810 face each other across the valley. A fine surviving example set well back from the street in one of the early suburbs of Bath is Walcot Methodist Chapel, a grand Classical building erected in 1815-1816 to the design of the Rev. William Jenkins. In Bristol, large nineteenth -century suburbs such as Clifton, Bishopston and Easton were well supplied with chapels of all denominations. Many of these are strung along the major roads leading away from the city producing the typical street-pattern of lines of two-storey shops and houses punctuated by the Gothic gable-ends of the nonconformist chapels. In Clifton, vast spiky Gothic-revival buildings such as Buckingham (1842) and Clifton Down (1868) rise amidst strictly Classical terraces, offending the sensibilities of some of the local conservationists.

Patterns of Development

The forces of settlement development are not sufficient to explain the distribution of chapels. Other pressures were at work. One such is the propensity of nonconformist congregations to inflict themselves with schisms. Being democratic organisations differences of opinion both at a local and a national level led to the foundation of many new chapels. The township of Kingswood, a linear settlement along the old Bristol to London highway, supported six chapels either on or near the kilometre length of road through the town centre. This pattern is entirely the product of various schisms. The original chapel was the Tabernacle which was founded in 1741 as a result of the evangelical activities of George Whitfield and John Cennick, but in 1745, John Cennick and his adherents left to form a Moravian Society with their own chapel on the opposite side of the road. Whitfield's breach with John Wesley in 1751 was only a foretaste of the future difficulties of Methodism as the movement was rent by further dispute. Kingswood, in common with many towns and villages, was graced with chapels of three of these main branches, each of whom built on a grand scale: the Old Connexion, that is the Wesleyan Methodists, erected Wesley in a huge graveyard in Blackhorse Road in 1843, the Free Methodists built Zion in 1854-1855 on Two Mile Hill and finally the Primitive Methodists, not to be outdone, moved in 1873 from their modest premises on Two Mile Hill to an equally grand structure further east named Bourne after one of the founders of their movement. These three chapels represent disagreements of national proportions, but the sixth chapel was the product of a purely local dispute. In 1867, the Trustees of Whitfield's Tabernacle clashed with the majority of the members over the choice of a new pastor. The dispute was so bitter that, as the building was vested in the Trustees, some of the membership left to found Kingswood Congregational Church in Hanham Road.

Archaeological traces are to be found in most towns and villages of the reversal of this process during the twentieth century as chapels have been closed following the reunification of Methodism which was substantially completed in 1933. In Kingswood, Zion is the one Methodist church still in use for worship whilst Wesley and Bourne have joined the large numbers of buildings which are either lying empty or have been demolished or are being used for other purposes. Occasionally examples can be found of buildings used by other denominations such as the Roman Catholic church of St. Mary formerly Wesley, Warmley Tower, but secular uses are more common. Berkeley Road United Methodist Free Church (1865), Bishopston, is just recognisable under all the advertising material in its new guise as a Tyre Service Centre, but the curved rear wall is the only external clue to the survival of the building which was Portwall Lane Free Methodist, Bristol.

Deliberate programmes of evangelisation can be responsible for the siting of churches especially in the poorer areas of towns and parts of the countryside. Large wealthy congregations set out to found or adopt daughter churches, often quite clearly called "missions". For instance, Highbury built its new Salmon Street Mission Chapel in Kingsdown in 1860 and Redland Park Congre-

gational Church for a period adopted Kingsland Chapel in the area of the Dings and the chapel at Upton Cheyney both of which had found themselves in financial difficulty (Edwards 1941, 64-67). Wealthier churches also helped support the many home missionary societies like the Bristol City Mission Society, founded in 1826, which by 1906 was servicing eleven places of worship in the poorer areas of the city such as Totterdown, Bedminster and Easton. Churches in more prosperous areas were often started in the same way. Redland Park Congregational Church (1861) is a daughter of Highbury which in its turn was founded from Penn Street Tabernacle.

Moves away from the city centre were not just a feature of daughter churches. Depopulation of these areas, a process which has been gaining momentum since the 1850s, has led to the abandonment of inner city sites in favour of newer premises in the suburbs. The congregation of Bridge Street Independent Chapel, the same folk who had disturbed Joseph Leech with their lusty singing, removed to Clifton Down in 1868. The devasation caused by the war and post-war clearances accelerated the drift so that now Broadmead Baptist Church is one of only four chapels within the built-up area of the Medieval city in regular use for worship.

Burial Grounds

Chapel buildings are not the sole contribution nonconformity has made to the landscape. As has been mentioned above, the Moravian settlement at East Tytherton consisted of a school, burial ground and houses for the sisters and brethren and their minister as well as a chapel.

The need for a burial ground independent of the parish graveyard became particularly pressing after the passing of the Commonwealth. Quakers were expressly forbidden burial rights in parish grounds and other nonconformists found increasing difficulties with the parochial authorities. On 9th October, 1681, the members of Broadmead, Bristol, "considering the parsons would not suffer those whom they please to excommunicate to be buried in their graveyards, concluded to join with the congregation walking with their brother Gifford (by which is meant the Baptist congregation at the Pithay), to buy a garden in Red Cross Lane for a burying place" (Child and Shipley 49). The purchase of a burial ground on a site far removed from the meeting house was a common practice, which in this case the siting of both Broadmead and Pithay in densely built-up environments dictated. A few of these urban graveyards survive, such as that of the Unitarian congregation of Lewins Mead, Bristol, whose ground is in Brunswick Square. It still retains the Speech House built about 1750 where the funeral oration could be given in inclement weather. Detached burial grounds are not however just a phenomenon of urban areas. Many rural Friends' Meetings purchased land away from their place of worship. The walled burial ground dated 1690 of the Lawrence Weston meeting is preserved in Kings Weston Lane.

During the eighteenth century, it became more usual to provide burial places in the ground surrounding the chapel building or in an adjacent plot of

land. There are many examples of chapels set in their own burial ground:- Hanham Baptist, Frenchay Unitarian, Thornbury Friends' Meeting, Clutton Methodist, Hope, Hotwells and Ebenezer, Bedminster.

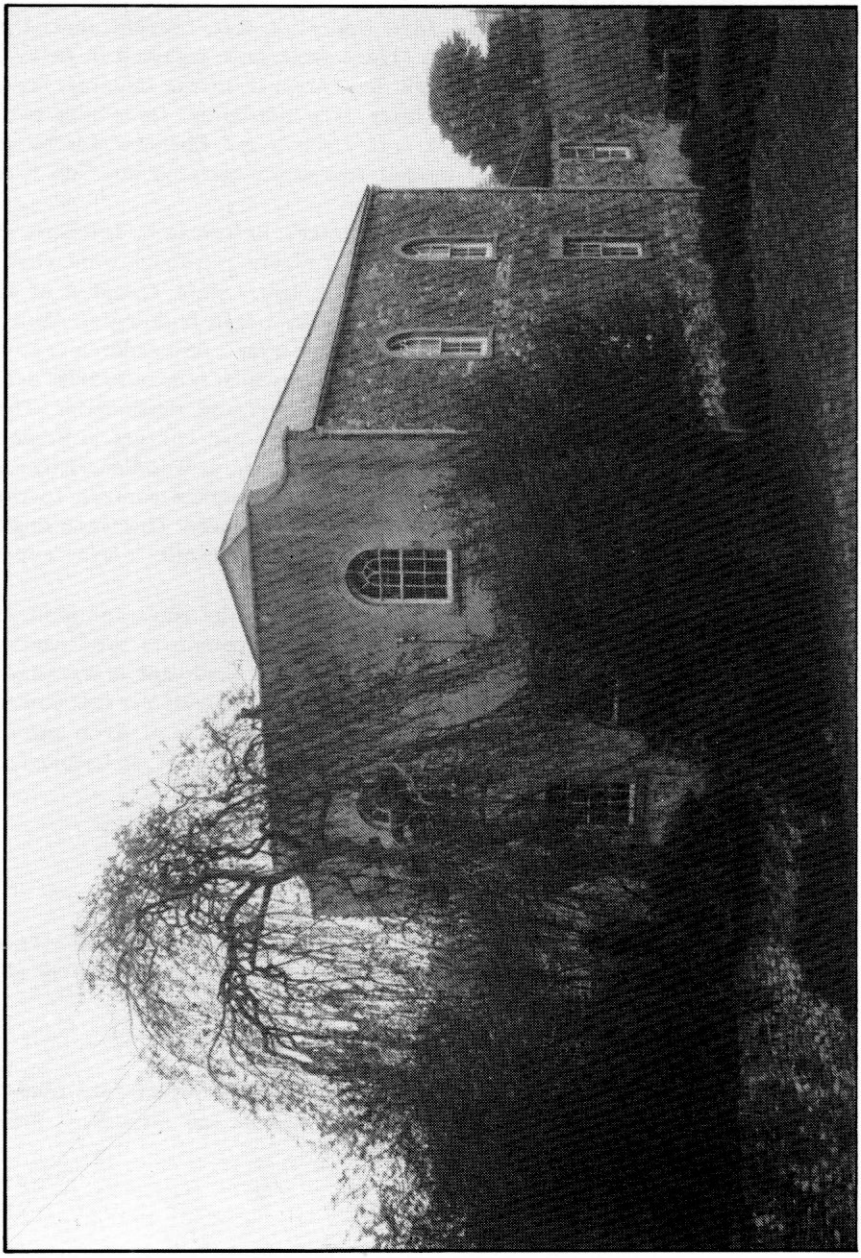
Usually the burials in graveyards of the Friends are left unmarked. The other nonconformist grounds.provide the same rich source of evidence as parish graveyards - their numerous memorials. Their inscriptions bear unique witness to the history of a community. One headstone at Hebron, Bedminster, commemorates John Smith, "who was accidentally killed at Dean Lane Coal Pit, April 23, 1877, aged 17 years." Unfortunately many grounds have been cleared without any record being made.

Other buildings.

It is unusual to find a place of worship standing in complete isolation and it may well have rooms with other functions designed into the same structure. This is the position of accommodation for the minister which is built above the chapel in the instance of Wesley's New Room in its confined site in Broadmead or more commonly as a two-storey dwelling built at one end of the chapel as at Ebenezer, Bridgeyate (1810). The designer of the former chapel of Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, Vineyards, Bath (1765), boldly placed its two-storey minister's house in battlement Gothic across the front of the chapel. Although it was later the practice to provide accommodation elsewhere, there are examples of a detached residence being purpose-built either on an adjoining site or in a few cases actually within the burial ground as at Kingswood Tabernacle.

The most common element of any nonconformist complex is the school and meeting rooms. These may also be an extension to the main structure of the chapel and built under the same roof-line as at White's Hill or, because the fall of ground level permits, greater impressiveness is impared to the facade of the chapel by raising the whole structure over the suite of school and meeting rooms which occupy the basement. This device can be seen at Staple Hill Methodist Church (1874), Clevedon Methodist Church and Fishponds Baptist Church (rebuit about 1902). Separate buildings were provided from new as at Wesley, Kingswood, where two sets of school buildings were built in 1850, but such instances are not common. It is far more usual to see a new, more commodious chapel on an additional plot of ground alongside the old which has then been converted to use as school and meeting rooms and often may be the sole reason for the survival of the early building. The recent changes in the use of such facilities is one reason why so many early chapel buildings have disappeared, either completely cleared as was the 1837 chapel at Wesley, Bedminster, or demolished for a new building as happened to the former Hanham Baptist chapel (1802). The congregation of Kingswood Tabernacle however are about to refurbish their early building as a chapel now that its Victorian replacement (1853) is too large for their requirements and too expensive to maintain.

Mention should be made of the many day schools built by nonconformist congregations, most of which were assimilated into the British and Foreign



Clutton Methodist Church
An early nineteenth-century building standing in its graveyard by the Bristol - Shepton Mallet highroad at the west end of the village.

Schools Society and later, under the 1870 Education Act, brought under the management of the local school boards. There were once eighteen in Bristol, according to Arrowsmith (236), though few original school buildings have survived. That in British Road, Bedminster, is a substantial stone-built two-storey structure which view in its bulk with Hebron and Ebenezer nearby as a major feature in a townscape of modest two-storey terraced housing. It is inscribed, BRITISH SCHOOL – MDCCCXLVI.

Many special schools such as Mary Carpenter's Reformatory for Girls at the Red Lodge, Bristol, were housed in existing buildings, though some charitable institutions were purpose-built on a much larger scale. Grandest of all are the New Orphan Houses which George Muller began building at Ashley Down in 1849 and ultimately provided acommodation for 2,050 children.

Finally notice should be made of the buildings which nonconformist denominations provided for training their own ministers and missionaries. The Moravians, Congregationalists, Baptists and Methodists had colleges in Bristol, the oldest being the Baptist College. The present college in Woodland Road is a pleasant brick-built neo-Tudor group of 1913, in complete contrast to the huge building of 1806-1812 in Stokes Croft which it replaced. This was a single four-storey block with a chapel at ground-level and dormitories on the upper floors.

In conclusion, the nonconformist contribution to the landscape is in its scale relatively modest. By its nature it was rarely to command the financial resources or generate the need for major changes in the landscape in ways such as the gentry or great Medieval institutions were able to achieve. Yet that contribution must be seen as an essential element in the landscape of Avon and its surroundings and as such is susceptible to the techniques of archaeological analysis.

Lecture given at Clevedon on Saturday 27th October 1984 as part of the Avon Archaeological Council symposium: "The Evolution of the Church in the Landscape."

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to express his thanks to Vicky Bonney, John Bryant, John Durnell, Francis Greenacre, Curator in Fine Art, Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery, Bruce Macfarlane and John Saysell for their kind assistance.

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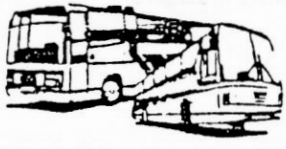

CONSTITUENT SOCIETIES
CLEVEDON CIVIC SOCIETY

The Clevedon Civic Society was formed in March 1970 with the aim of encouraging high standards of architecture and town planning in the town; to arouse interest in the beauty and history of the local scene and to try to help and maintain these standards. At the same time it would endeavour to promote the development, preservation and improvement of general public interests and amenities. Five committees were established to carry out these various aims and over the intervening sixteen years, although the committees have changed with the times, both in content and personnel, they have enabled members to voice their opinions and influence the continuing character of the town.

The pivot of the Society's activities has been the Conservation and Planning Group, which keeps a watching brief on planning applications, commenting on these to the Local Authority with whom there has been a good relationship through the years. The Group has influenced many decisions on town planning and has objected on numerous occasions to proposals which they considered injurious to the standard and appearance of architectural features of the town. Support was given to the Pier Trust in its efforts to rebuild the pier and also to the scheme for the redevelopment of the town centre. A pilot study for conservation covering the beach area resulted in Clevedon's first designated conservation area and over the years others have followed. The various types of street lights in the conservation areas have been identified and plotted. A photographic survey was made of window replacements.

The Local History Group researched and discusses the past history of the town and has published a pamphlet with three history trails explaining the Victoria aspects of the many buildings of that period. The growth of Clevedon during the nineteenth century has been published as a history entitled *Clevedon from the Village to the Town* and has sold well over a thousand copies.

The Tree Group surveyed the trees in the town and co-operated in the planting of trees in the new development areas and approach roads to the motorway.

The Footpath Group scheduled the public footpaths and rights of way keeping a constant focus on any infringements of these rights.

The Environment Group is concerned with the aspects of the town which might be improved and has a number of enhancement schemes which add to the beauty of the surroundings.

Public meetings, with speakers on chosen subjects, have been a continuing interest of the Society and have covered a wide variety of topics of interest to the community at large.

G. H. Case

BOOK REVIEWS

AVON'S PAST FROM THE AIR 28 pp. 1984 £1.00

This is an excellent booklet and Avon County Council Planning Department are to be congratulated for producing it at such a reasonable price. Why, however, do such monolithic organisations fail to give credit to their officers for such work? Only in very small print on page 2 is it acknowledged that Rob Iles put together this collection of air photographs and the commentaries that go with them.

The booklet consists of 23 air pictures plus the cover photograph depicting, roughly chronologically, important archaeological sites in the county. These range in date from Stanton Drew stone circles to air pictures of medieval towns, and from pictures of cropmarks and earthworks to buildings. Most are obliques - only two are verticals. Each is accompanied by a paragraph of description which is reliable, adequate and to the point. The air pictures are from a variety of sources, including a number taken by Rob Iles himself. Most are, however, from the splendid collection of John White of West Air Photography and it is good to see some of these being published and made available to the public. They are most impressive and anyone who has tried aerial photography will acknowledge the great skill of John White. Other pictures are from the fine collections of Cambridge University, the early RAF survey of the Ministry of Defence and the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Major Allen collection).

The booklet is produced by offset lithography and there is always a good chance with modern printing methods that plates will not be reproduced well. This has not happened here and all the detail and clarity of the original pictures is reproduced.

This should prove a useful booklet for both the general public and the part-time archaeologists in Avon and I recommend it strongly to both groups.

Mick Aston

TALES OF THE RAILS, by Ernie Ross. 96pp., illus. Bristol: Bristol Broadsides, 1984. £6.95 (£1.95 paper).

Such is the seemingly endless tide of personal reminiscences by ex-railwaymen which have appeared in print in recent years that one might be excused for wondering whether even the most ardent of enthusiasts will wilt at the thought of yet another such publication. Indeed, it must now be difficult to find something original to write about railways. But to this end, Ernie Ross has succeeded - possibly because he has written less about footplatemen, and has chosen instead to concentrate on those grades of railwaymen to whom previous authors have paid only scant regard.

Tales of the Rails is a book of personal - and mainly humourous - anecdotes relating to Ernie Ross's experiences working on the Great Western Railway

and the Western Region of British Raiways between the 1930's and the 1970's. Most stories are allegedly true - although one suspects that, as with all good tales, one or two of the events have become 'exaggerated' with the passage of time!

Mr. Ross started his career on the railway in 1936 as a Porter at Trowbridge, and at a wage of £2 for a 48 hour working week. In 1939 he moved to Bristol Temple Meads, but with the outbreak of the war, was soon transferred to Devizes to take up duties as a 'Scale 4 Shunter'. Subsequent moves took him to Yeovil Pen Mill, and later on to Wells, where he was promoted to the grade of Goods Guard. Wells was to remain a 'home base' for some 10 years, after which he moved back to Bristol; ultimately retiring in 1976 having completed 40 years of service.

In all, *Tales of the Rails* contains more than 70 short stories; few of which exceed a page in length, but covering a diversity of subjects ranging from window cleaning and fire drill duties in the 1930's, to the use of chewing gum to remedy a troublesome engine in one of British Railways' modern diesel locomotives! Wartime experiences, emergencies, personalities, single-line working, slip coaches, banana trains, 'strawberry specials' ... and many, many more subjects. (I particularly liked the tale of the errant pig who succeeded in delaying a local freight train bound for Wells on the old Cheddar Valley line!) The book concludes with a glossary of railwaymen's 'jargon' - a useful explanation of many of the terms used throughout the text.

Unfortunately the choice of illustrations fails to match the standard of the narrative. Several photographs appear to bear no relevance to any of the stories told, whilst others are either of poor reproduction, or of limited interest. A pity when one considers that, within the County of Avon, reside some of the best-known of railway photographers, whose collections would undoubtedly have yielded local material far more relevant to Mr Ross's text.

M. J. Arlett.

BRISTOL: THE PUBLIC VIEW, by B. Little. 80pp. Bristol: Redcliffe Press, 1985. £2.75

This book contains a description of Bristol's non-ecclesiastical buildings accessible to the public - the architect, the architectural influences, how the buildings came to be built. It also includes twelve statues.

It is concerned not only with the buildings which stand today, but, where applicable, looks back to consider the earlier buildings which served the same function back as far as the Middle Ages. So early Guildhalls and Council meeting places are described, as well as today's Council House.

There are very arbitrary inclusions and ommissions. For example, the Prince Street Assembly Rooms are described and illustrated, but not the Hotwells Assembly Rooms or the former Assembly Rooms now standing in The Mall, Clifton. What is included is probably determined by what has been described in earlier books in the same series, with the number of inclusions limited to make a convenient book size and a reasonable cost.

There are thirty photographs and illustrations, with four illustrations of early buildings no longer extant, the photographs taken by those admirable photographers, John Trelawney Ross and Gordon Kelsey. Some photographs have lost a little clarity in printing.

There seems to be an infinite demand for small reasonably-priced books about Bristol subjects. A few years ago, there were none and now there seems to be dozens - all informative reading.

Dorothy Brown

THE STORY OF CONGRESBURY, by Alex S. Cran. 248 pp; 16 plates, end paper maps. Bristol: Redcliffe Press, 1983. £9.50

In the late 19th and early 20th century when printing was cheap and the life of a village Rector or Vicar was more leisured, it was commonplace for any country parson remotely interested in the past to chronicle, with varying competence, the "history and antiquities" of his parish. With rising costs, and rising pressures on clergy, such books have become as rare as the coelacanth: to be greeted with surprise when one surfaces, and with delight when it proves to be an excellent specimen of its kind. This substantial village history has been long awaited, represents a triumph of perseverence over health problems, and will delight the many who have the highest regard for its author.

Congresbury's ancient origins have long been recognised, with 19th century interest in Roman sites and the St. Congar legend reinforced by all the archaeological work at Cadbury Hill (Cadcong) and Henley Wood in the 1960s - 1970s. The specialists have imbued us all with a proper caution over Roman and post-Roman activity in this part of (old) Somerset; but Alex Cran's brief survey covers all the main aspects of, and recent work on, these early periods. Similarly, his review of Domesday Book and the early manorial history of the estate provide a sound background, against which there is still ample scope for more research to unravel, in particular, the complex shape of the village and the reasons behind it. This early history occupies the first quarter of the book. The great turning-point, for this author, is the survey of the manor of Congresbury in 1567, of which he gives a detailed analysis. Before 1567 chapter headings (except for "Congar" himself) are concerned with things: the legend, the village, the manor, the church. After 1567 all except one ("Enclosures, Tithes & Drains") relate to people. With the wealth of records surviving from the 16th century onwards, and latterly with his intimate knowledge of the village community during a quarter-century as Vicar, Alex Cran uses the remaining three-quarters of his book to demonstrate that history *is* people: people's farming, people's jobs, people's houses large and small, pastimes, schooling, resources - and most of all, opinions. Poverty, he makes clear, is neither picturesque nor uplifting; it makes for a harsh and narrow outlook. Prosperity alleviates some hardships but can bring new problems of its own. As those who know him would expect, all this is recorded without any trace of whimsy or sentimentality, but with a breadth and balance which is a rare and precious talent. Few village histories can move smoothly from a Saxon saint and Domesday Book, to the

1947 Agriculture Act and the impact of the E.E.C., and finish with such a detailed account of the interactions of various elements in the community in the 1950s - 1970s: farms, schools, church, gymkhana, housing estates and "incomers", the village doctor, the changing nature of a "village" garden. Included as one appendix is a full transcript of the exceptionally detailed manorial boundary perambulations of 1805, and as a second, the 1960 circular listing village societies and organisations. We can judge by the fascination of the 1567 survey to us, now, what the value of these later sections may be to local historians in another 400 years.

There are no footnotes, but sources are clearly indicated in the text and dovetail satisfactorily with the bibliography on p.247-8. The chapters are subdivided into short sections, by subject; but this, while admirably clear, does not make up for the one major omission: an index, which whatever the financial constraints should have been an intrinsic part of a book of this calibre. The 16 plates cover a wide range of subjects and are well printed, even old prints being coaxed into reasonable clarity. The map of parish and village inside both front and back covers is a little too spidery for happy reproduction, but thus placed is most convenient to use for reference. The whole book is a most handsome and polished production, with clear print on good paper, a stoud hardback binding and an attractive hardwearing bookjacket, which justifies its price. This is a book which will last, in all senses. It will be of interest not just to people in and around Congresbury (which now has its own Local History Society) and to historians interested in the villages of the north Somerset moors; but also as an example of what a sound village history can be, and as a pleasure to handle and to read.

Frances Neale.

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BOOKS RECEIVED

BATES, E. R. *Wesley's family at the New Room in the Horsefair, Bristol.* (New Room, Bristol, 1986, 75p.)

CHANNON, G. *Bristol and the promotion of the Great Western Railway* (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1985, £1.00).

Gloucester in old photographs from the County Library Collection; collected by Jill Voyce. (Alan Sutton, 1985, £5.95)

HEIGHWAY, C. *Gloucester: a history and guide* (Alan Sutton, 1985, £5.95)

McGRATH, P., *ed. A Bristol miscellany* (Bristol Record Society, 1985, £9.00)

Mangotsfield picture past (Downend Local History Society, 1985, £3.00)

MOSS, F. *City pit: memoirs of a Speedwell miner* (Bristol Broadsides, 1986, £2.50)

RICHARDSON, D., *ed Bristol, Africa and the eighteenth century slave trade to America* (Bristol Record Society, 1986, £9.00)

SHERBORNE, J. *William Canynges (1402 - 1474)* (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1985, £1.00)

Sources for doing Victorian local history in Avon schools (County of Avon Planning Dept., 1984, 65p.)

St. John the Baptist Church - Medieval conduct at Bristol, England: a report and survey of features surviving in August 1984 (Temple Local History Group, 1984, £1.80)

The Story of Baltic Wharf, Bristol (Bristol & West Housing Association, [1984], *gratis*)

WOOLRICH, A. P. *Printing in Bristol* (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1986, £1.00)

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